

What is claimed is:

1. A method for the purification of marigold oleoresin, which is characterized by carrying out a step of subjecting marigold oleoresin to supercritical fluid extraction and a step
5 of dissolving marigold oleoresin in a ketone solvent, cooling the solution and removing the ingredient which precipitated in solution.

2. A method for the purification of marigold oleoresin claimed in Claim 1, which is characterized in that purified
10 marigold oleoresin having a low viscosity and a high lutein content is obtained by carrying out a step of subjecting marigold oleoresin to supercritical fluid extraction and a step of dissolving marigold oleoresin in a ketone solvent, cooling the solution and removing the ingredient which precipitated in
15 solution.

3. A method for the purification of marigold oleoresin claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 2, which is characterized by carrying out a step of supercritical fluid extraction in the presence of a diluent.

20 4. A method for the purification of marigold oleoresin claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 3, which is characterized by using a supercritical fluid selected from the group consisting of carbon dioxide, ethane, ethylene, propane, toluene and dinitrogen monoxide.

25 5. A method for the purification of marigold oleoresin, which is characterized in that the ketone solvent described in Claim 1 is acetone, methylethylketone or diethylketone.

6. A method for the purification of marigold oleoresin claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5, wherein the supercritical

fluid extraction is carried out using a carbon dioxide supercritical fluid under the condition that the carbon dioxide pressure is $(980 \text{ to } 2940) \times 10^4 \text{ Pa}$ ($=\text{N/m}^2$) and the temperature is at critical temperature to 80°C .

5 7. A method for the purification of marigold oleoresin claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5, wherein the supercritical fluid extraction is carried out using a carbon dioxide supercritical fluid under the condition that the carbon dioxide pressure is $(1470 \text{ to } 2450) \times 10^4 \text{ Pa}$ ($=\text{N/m}^2$) and the temperature
10 is at 40°C to 60°C .

8. Purified marigold oleoresin obtained by a method described in any one of Claims 1 to 7.

9. Purified marigold oleoresin having low viscosity and a high lutein content obtained by a method described in any
15 one of Claims 1 to 7.

10. Purified marigold oleoresin which contains not less than 20% of lutein-fatty acid ester and has a viscosity of not more than 20,000 mPa.s at 30°C .

11. Purified marigold oleoresin which contains not less
20 than 30% of lutein-fatty acid ester and has a viscosity of not more than 20,000 mPa.s at 30°C .

12. Purified marigold oleoresin described in Claim 11, which has a viscosity of not more than 10,000 mPa.s at 30°C .

13. Purified marigold oleoresin described in Claim 11,
25 which has a viscosity of not more than 5,000 mPa.s at 30°C .

14. A soft capsule which contains the purified marigold oleoresin described in any one of Claims 8 to 13.